105. Some suggestions for the improvement of Ayurveda.

Mr. C. P. Kochukunju Pillai (Member, Kottarakara Taluk) said that, since the benefit of the western system of medicine was available only to a very small fraction of the population, the major portion of the people were receiving medical relief under the indigenous systems of medicine. The Ayurvedic system of treatment was cheaper, more popular and specially suited to certain diseases. Government were spending much more for allopathic institutions than for those of Ayurveda. The Member said that much improvement in the indigenous system had been made recently, but he was of opinion that the reform of the department did not come up to public expectation. He then made the following suggestions for the immediate consideration of Government. Though the people were grateful to Government for raising the minimum grant to Vaidyasalas from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15, he suggested that it was desirable to increase that amount still further. The reduction of grant-in-aid Vidyasalas from 80 to 72 was regrettable and he prayed that the Vaidyasalas at Eraniel, Suchindram, Ranni and Chengannur, recently abolished might be restored. Under the recent G. O. on the subject the maximum number of Vaidyasalas fixed was 120 and it was stated that that maximum was to be reached in 10 years. The Member requested that Vaidyasalas might be established at the rate of 10 every year, the 8 institutions abolished being brought into existence immediately. It was desirable that all the stations for the 120 Vaidyasalas should be decided in adavance with a view to the necessary buildings being put up by those students of the Ayurvedic College who might pass and who might be inclined to open them in those localities. There should be more Visha Vaidyasalas than at present. Vaidyans in charge of grant-in-aid institutions should be given training in the Ayurvedic College, Trivandrum, in the use of the thermometre, the stethoscope, preparation of temperature charts, prescription of diet, etc. They should also be given a course of lectures in hygiene and should be well-versed in the performance of minor operations.

The Member then urged on the Government the need for the publication of unpublished manuscripts on Ayurveda and suggested the creation of a committee of competent gentlemen for the purpose. The next request of the Member was that an Ayurvedic magazine should be run by the department with a view to popularise the system and also enlighten the general public. An Ayurveda hospital should be opened in each of the District head-quarters with a pharmacy attached to each and the pay of the Vaidyans in charge of those institutions which should be attractive might be fixed at about Rs. 100. If it was not possible to have a pharmacy, arrangements should be made for the supply to the District hospitals of drugs from the central pharmacy at Trivandrum which, however, required considerable improvements, such as the introduction of time-saving and labour-saving machinery. Patent medicines should be prepared there, a price list and the catalogue of medicines published, and medicines sold through private agencies on the lines of the Andhra Ayurvedic Pharmacy.

The number of Ayurveda Patasalas should be increased and the grants to the existing ones should be enhanced. A grant should be given to the Airur Patasala and the schools at Ettumanur and Changankulangara should be given larger amounts as grants. English-knowing students should be encouraged to join those Patasalas. Four graduates and a few English School Leaving Certificate holders should be trained in the Ayurveda College.

The present botanical gardens should be shifted to a better place and rare medicinal plants cultivated there.

A depōt should be opened for selling good medicinal herbs.

106. Improvements to the Department of Ayurveda by the establishm[illegible]ment Ayurveda hospitals and dispensaries in important towns.

Mr. V.R. Kochunni Vaidyan (Member, Nominated) after offering[illegible]d, same thanks to the Government for the patronage given to the Ayurverda syst[illegible]d men[illegible] to this sytem of treatment was assuredly more efficacious than the allopathic [illegible] to justify pathic system or even the *unani* system of treatment which was in vo[illegible]

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India. The Member traced the origin of Ayurveda from the time when Parasurama constituted the *Ashtavaidyans* of Kerala. The descendants of those *Ashtavaidyans*, well-versed in Ayurvedic lore, even now existed, and they deserved every encouragement.

Though with the advent of British supremacy in Travancore, the enviable place of the Palace Vaidyan had gone to the Darbar Physician, Ayurvedic medicines and ointments were even now being daily used by the members of the Royal Family. The Ayurveda Department was organised by His Highness the Maha Raja in the first year of his ascending the *masnad*, but the Member regretted that, though it was 37 years since that Department was established, it had not met with tangible improvement and encouragement, and as a consequence no genuine benefit was being derived by the people. Referring to the Administration Report for 1097, the Member observed that, though there were 7 or 8 Hospitals in the metropolis, there were 31,000 patients in the Ayurveda Hospital, and that was a clear proof of the efficacy of the Ayurveda system. It was regrettable that such a benefit was denied to the people living in the mofussil. It could not be considered that by merely increasing the number of grant-in-aid Vaidyans the improvement of the Ayurveda system had been achieved. Real benefit to the people would be possible only when Ayurveda hospitals were established in every important centre of the State. The Member said that at Parur the building which had been first utilised as the hospital was now vacant and he requested that an Ayurvedic hospital might be started there. He prayed that efficient and reputed Vaidyans might be deemed to have passed the prescribed higher examination in Medicine. Celebrated Vaidyans did not come forward for Government aid on account of the extremely small grant that was being offered to them. He suggested that at least a grant of Rs. 50 might be awarded to Vaidyans of the first grade. The Member represented that the people of Puttanchira were suffering great hardship for want of a medical institution in that locality and prayed that a grant-in-aid Vaidyasala might be opened there.

Dewan's reply.—In the first place, let me assure the Assembly that there is no indifference on the part of the Government in regard to the Ayurvedic system of medicine. It is true that the expenditure on the Ayurvedic system is not anything like the expenditure incurred on the allopathic system. The reasons for this are manifold. One reason is that there are highly qualified allopathic doctors who could be got in large numbers, whereas it is difficult to get anything like the same number of practitioners of the Ayurvedic system, with recognised qualifications. There may be very clever Ayurvedic doctors, but the difficulty is that they do not possess the hallmark of qualification, and that it is very difficult to distinguish between the really efficient Ayurvedic doctors, and those who are only nominally doctors but are not really such. Financial consideration is not the only consideration that stands in the way of increased expenditure on Ayurveda. Government will continue to devote more and more attention as time advances to the development of the Ayurvedic system. These are the general remarks that I wish to make.

In regard to the remarks of Mr. Kochukunju Pillai that the number of Ayurvedic institutions which are aided by Government has been reduced from 80 to 72, the explanation is that, when these institutions were examined by the Director of Ayurveda, he found that eight of them had become defunct either by the death of the practitioners or for other reasons. I now understand that in Chengannur there is another Vaidyan who is running the Vaidyasala rendered defunct by the death of the previous incumbent. It may also be the case in the other places you have mentioned. The Director will be asked to enquire and say whether these institutions have been taken up and run by other competent men. It is only after the receipt of his reply that the Government can decide whether these new practitioners should be aided or not. You have made a number of valuable suggestions and those suggestions will receive careful consideration on receipt of the report of the Director to whom they will be referred. The suggestion that the number of these institutions should be increased at the rate of ten per year will receive the attention of Government. You say that the location of all the 120 grant-in-aid Vaidyasalas should be fixed now in advance.

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I am not quite sure whether that is expedient and desirable. Qualified persons turned out of the Ayurveda College may not find it convenient to settle down in places which are fixed in advance. Your suggestion in regard to the collection and publication of treatises on Ayurveda is a very important one and will be considered by the Government. In regard to your proposal for training the present grant-in-aid Ayurvedic practitioners, I do not know whether all of them will consent to undergo training in the Ayurvedic College. The expenditure on that account may not be very great, but it involves inconvenience. When these people undergo training, there must be men to take their places and run those institutions during their absence. If there are no substitutes, the public will be put to inconvenience. In regard to the monthly journal suggested by you, it is an enterprise which should more appropriately be undertaken by private persons. You want the number of Ayurvedic hospitals to be raised. I shall call for proposals from the Director in regard to that. In regard to the aided schools at Ettumannur and Changankulangara, the G. O. has already laid down now that the question of enhancement of their grants will be considered at the time when the budget for 1099 is framed. The publication of a catalogue of medicines and their prices is a very desirable thing, and I will ask the Director to prepare a catalogue of medicines which are prepared and sold in the Pharmacy. As regards the development of the Pharmacy in the way of increasing the output of medicines by manufacturing them with the aid of machinery and standardising them, there is one point to be considered. Already, I have heard complaints that private practitioners are not able to sell their medicines, because the Pharmacy sells medicines cheaper. We must take care to see that we do not stifle private enterprise.

The Assembly adjourned at 5-45 P. M.

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